



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

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THE TWILIGHT OF MONGOLIA'S REINDEER HERDERS

VIDEO

SUNRISE, LANDSCAPE SHOTS,
ANIMALS, GENERAL SHOTS OF
TSAATAN

TEPEES, HERDING

GOMBO WITH REINDEER

GOMBO ON CAMERA

HERDERS WITH REINDEER /
PEOPLE MELTING SNOW,

AUDIO

NARRATION

For thousands of years, the high mountains that straddle Mongolia's northwest border with Siberian Russia have been the traditional herding ground for the Tsaatan – the reindeer people. (10.5")

An ancient people of Turkic descent, they roam with their herds in the mountainous forests known as the taiga region – the coldest place in Mongolia. (8.25")

62-year-old Gombo is one of the tribe's elders. (3")

GOMBO: (Mongolian) **M**

"My father and mother left me this lifestyle to continue. The land and the reindeers are their legacy to me." (6.25")

NARRATION

But today, only about 200 Tsaatan are left to continue their nomadic tradition. Their language

COOKING BREAD, MAKING FIRES,
PEOPLE AROUND TEPEES

and culture are in danger of becoming extinct as more young people are lured to the cities to pursue education and better opportunities. (14.5")

But for generations, tribal leaders have passed down traditions, survival skills and knowledge about nature to their children orally in their native language. (9.5")

GANBAT WITH SON

Ganbat, one of the Tsaatan elders shows his son the different kinds of moss the reindeer like to eat. (5.8")

GANBAT WITH MOSS IN HIS HAND

GANBAT: (Mongolian) **M**
"This one has a frizzy head and the stem is hollow, but this one is solid inside and the reindeer love it." (6.75")

CHILDREN ENTERING TEPEE /
TEACHER WITH CHILDREN
INSIDE TEPEE / CHILDREN
OUTSIDE SCHOOL EXERCISING /
CHILDREN PLAYING

But despite the elders' attempts, today, young people are more often taught in the Mongolian language by teachers sent by the State. This has Gombo concerned. (10.5")

GOMBO ON CAMERA

GOMBO: (Mongolian) **M**
"It means, they would accept the language and culture of Mongolia, they would lose our tradition." (4.5")

GOMBO GOING INTO TEPEE,
SMOKING / GOMBO'S ELDEST

NARRATION

Gombo lives alone with his eldest daughter, 29-year-old Dalaibayar. She's married to

DAUGHTER AND SON-IN-LAW /
GRANDCHILDREN PLAYING

Mungunshagai, who's from another ethnic group and they have two children. (9.75")

GRAND-DAUGHTERS PLAYS,
GOMBO GOING TO CAR, CAR
DRIVING THROUGH FOREST, CAR
CROSSING ICY LAKES,

When they reach the age of six or seven, they will likely go to school in the nearest village, Tsaaganur, a four-hour drive away. (7.25")

GOMBO WITH FAMILY IN HOUSE
WITH DAUGHTERS / DAUGHTERS
SERVE TEA

Gombo's wife has been living there, taking care of Gombo's two other daughters who have been studying here for several years. Nineteen-year-old Dalaijargal just graduated from high school last year. (12")

DALAIJARGAL ON CAMERA

DALAIJARGAL: (Mongolian) **F**

"I want to study Mongolian and English language teaching or law or social work..."

..When I become a teacher, I'll go back to the taiga to teach." (9")

TUG-OF-WAR

NARRATION

In an effort to preserve the Tsaatan language and culture, the Mongolian government, supported by various UN agencies, including the UN Development Program, set up a national project to improve the living conditions of the Tsaatan in 2007. (15.2")

BOLD AT WORK

BOLD: (Mongolian) **M**

"If they lose their language, their culture will disappear." (2.7")

NARRATION

Luvсандоржийн Bold, a linguist who studies the ancient languages of Mongolia, says this is an important first step. (7.2")

BOLD ON CAMERA

BOLD: (Mongolian) **M**

"For example, all the knowledge in nature, culture, philosophy, medicine and many others will be lost." (6")

NARRATION

MONTAGE OF UN ACTIVITIES,
GOMBO GETTING CANVAS /
CHILDREN PLAY

It includes providing essential goods and materials such as canvas for tepees, improving the health of their herds, and making the study of the Tssatan language mandatory for their children. (10.5")

GOMBO AND GUNBAT / KIDS
PLAY WITH REINDEER

Gombo and Gunbat are hopeful that as the conditions of life in the taiga improve, their tradition will live on. (7")

GUNBAT ON CAMERA, CHILDREN
AND GUNBAT WITH REINDEER

GUNBAT: (Mongolian) **M**

"I want my children to get an education. There's no rule saying that people with education cannot herd reindeer." (8")

GOMBO ON CAMERA, SON
RIDING ON REINDEER

GOMBO: (Mongolian) **M**

"In the future, there would be better conditions for living in taiga. My children would live in taiga according to the modern life condition. I believe that they will live here, herding reindeers and continuing my ancestors' life in taiga." (14.5")

NARRATION

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Patricia K. Chan for
the United Nations. (4")